

FROM FIELD AND STUDY

Early Arrival of Bee-eaters.—Bee-eaters (*Merops ornatus*) usually appear in the Bolgart district during the first week in October. In 1954 their first appearance was noted on the first day of September. The birds were numerous and their "reedy" calls filled the skies. Soon after the flock spread out and only individuals were seen.

—RICA ERICKSON, Bolgart

Tortoises as predators on water-birds.—In January, 1954, I was watching a Coot (*Fulica atra*) with its head beneath the water and body tipped up like a feeding duck. Pronounced jerking movements of its body made me realise that it was trying to free itself from a tortoise that had gripped it firmly by the neck and was attempting to drag it beneath the water. Within seven minutes the Coot was dead.

Previously I had seen ducks grasped by tortoises, but they had always been able to struggle free. However, it is probable that smaller birds and the young of larger species are frequently taken by tortoises.

—JULIAN R. FORD, Fremantle.

Out of season blooming of *Stylidium repens*.—The exceptional floods in February of this year caused an extraordinary blooming of the Matted Trigger-plant (*S. repens*). In the Bolgart district this plant usually blooms twice a year, in autumn and spring (see *W.A. Nat.*, vol. 2, 1950, p. 97). However, these plants were seen in flower a week after the February floods. The succeeding hot dry weather brought the blooming to an abrupt and definite end. The plants lay dormant again until the April rains when the same individual plants bloomed freely, a second time within a few weeks, the normal autumn flowering time.

It may be mentioned that in the Albany area in some years *S. repens* may be found in bloom during most of the summer months, which may be the result of prolonged damp weather.

—RICA ERICKSON, Bolgart.

The "New Tortoise".—With reference to the supposed new tortoise, *Emydura inspectata* Glauert, 1954 (*West. Aust. Nat.*, vol. 4, no. 6, p. 125), intimation has been received from Dr. Ernest Williams of the Biological Laboratories of Harvard University pointing out that it is a synonym of *Pseudemydura umbrina* Siebenrock, 1907 (*Sitzb. Akad. Wiss. Wien*, 116, Abt. 1, p. 1205). This tortoise is known only from the type which reached the Vienna Natural History Museum in 1839 from Australia.

Application to Vienna for further information has resulted in a letter from Dr. J. Eiselt, who regretted that particulars connected with the type, in Fitzinger's writing, were limited to the words — "*Phrynops Macquarrii*. Nova Hollandia Jun."

As at the time of receipt of the specimen Western Australia was often referred to as Nova Hollandia it is probable that it was